NWS Form E-5 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE **MONTHLY REPORT OF RIVER AND FLOOD CONDITIONS**	**HYDROLOGIC SERVICE AREA:** **Pocatello, Idaho** **REPORT FOR:** **MONTH: March YEAR: 2004**
TO: Hydrologic Operations Division, W/OH2 National Weather Service National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Silver Spring, Maryland 20910	**SIGNATURE:** Sherrie Hebert (In Charge of Hydrologic Service Area) **DATE** April 8, 2004
When no flooding occurs, include miscellaneous river conditions, such as significant rises, record low stages, ice conditions, snow cover, droughts and hydrologic products issued (NWS Instruction 10-924).	

X **An X in this box indicates that no flooding has occurred for the month within this hydrologic service area.**

Record high March temperatures, high winds and record low precipitation devastated mountain snowpack, dashing hopes of slight drought recovery for Eastern Idaho. March came as a complete reversal from February when persistent storms with record-breaking snowfall brought greater-than-normal precipitation to the Pocatello Hydrologic Service Area. The average March temperature for the Pocatello Regional Airport (PIH) was 41.6°F, 3.7°F warmer than normal.

Other Hydrologic Interests

Precipitation

Overall, March precipitation for the Pocatello HSA was 40.9% of normal for 40 of 41 reporting stations with climate data, according to Western Region Climate Center data. The majority of Pocatello HSA stations received less than 50% of normal March precipitation. Record-tying low precip occurred at three stations, each receiving zero precip: Arco Airport, Howe and Idaho Falls 46W. Only three stations received at least 90% of normal precipitation, with two stations reporting greater than normal:

1. Tetonia 144.4% 1.43 inches
2. Massacre Rocks 111.2% 1.49 inches
3. Aberdeen 94.4% 0.68 inches

Pocatello's March precipitation was 46.4% of normal at 0.64 inches, reducing the 2004 Water Year precipitation 15.8 percentage points to 107.6% from 123.4% in February. Even a storm on March 26 that produced a 24-hour rain record of 0.52 inches, breaking an old record of 0.34" in 1910, couldn't rescue the low precip month.

High temperatures partnered with high winds caused much of the mountain snowpack to sublimate rather than infiltrate or run off. The combination caused mountain snowpack to rapidly diminish over the month, with the major decreases spread throughout the month. Regarding the following regional sample, snow water equivalent dove 40 percentage points to 63% of normal from 103% in February. Precipitation also had a large decrease from 97% of normal in February to 85% for March.

	SWE % Avg		Precip % Avg Water Year 2004	
Basin	**Feb**	**Mar**	**Feb**	**Mar**
Big Wood	94	60	88	79
Little Wood	101	47	97	85
Big Lost	106	59	101	83
Little Lost & Birch	93	65	93	80
Henrys Fork & Teton	108	78	98	87
Snake Basin Above Palisades	93	65	89	79
Willow, Blackfoot & Portneuf	108	54	99	90
Oakley	119	76	110	99
Average	103	63	97	85

Source: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), April 9, 2004.

Reservoirs

The Upper Snake River reservoir system is at 53% of capacity, up 11% from March 5, 2004[1].

Reservoir	% Capacity Feb 29[2]	% Capacity Mar 31[3]	% of Average[3]	% of Last Year[3]
American Falls	61	75	87	93
Henry's Lake	77	79	84	101
Island Park	62	69	81	94
Little Wood	47	77	120	125
Mackay	47	53	72	112
Magic	12	25	45	130
Oakley	14	20	42	89
Palisades	37	43	65	97
Ririe	37	41	79	85
Lake Walcott	41[4]	67[1]	n/a	n/a

Source: (1) US Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), April 9, 2004; (2) NRCS, February 29, 2004; (3) NRCS, March 31, 2004; (4) BOR, March 5, 2004

Drought

Above-normal temperatures and below-normal precipitation further intensified drought conditions across Eastern Idaho in March. This was revealed in April Water Supply Outlooks that showed major decreases from the March outlooks. The National Drought Monitor rankings, which decreased over much of the HSA due to February's high precipitation amounts, remained in tact for the month. It is likely there will be categorical increases returning much of the HSA to D3, "Extreme", and D4, "Exceptional", over the coming spring and summer months. Soil moisture and storage are long-term drought indicators still holding strong to the high rankings that will likely halt further improvement as well.

Summary of Hydrologic Products Issued

No hydrologic products were issued for the month of March.

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